



Patrick AFB Newsletter for Military Retirees

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Cold War Experiments Lawsuit Update - Appeals Court Ruling

The U.S. military must continue to alert veterans exposed to chemical and biological weapons experiments of any new information that may affect their health and provide them ongoing medical care, a federal appeals court said Tuesday. The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals issued the ruling in a lawsuit brought against the U.S. Department of Defense on behalf of thousands of veterans. The veterans accuse the government of failing to properly treat health problems caused by the experiments. A lower court judge also said the veterans were entitled to ongoing medical care, but the judge declined to force the U.S. Army to provide it on the grounds that care was available through the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The 9th Circuit rejected that argument, saying there was no evidence presented that the care available at the VA would be "equal in scope and quality" to what the veterans say they are owed. The lawsuit argued that the VA system was too overburdened to properly treat veterans suffering health problems because of their participation in the experiments. Wayne Hall, a spokesman for the Army, said the Army was reviewing the court's findings. The veterans' 2009 lawsuit said the government exposed them to chemical agents, germs and drugs in researching how to defend against nontraditional weapons attacks. The lawsuit said the government failed to provide proper notice to many of the veterans about health hazards they faced by participating in the experiments. U.S. District Judge Claudia Wilken two years ago rejected most of the veterans' claims, saying the government has attempted to reach out and offer help to them over the years. [Source: Associated Press | June 30, 2015 ++]

VA Health Record ► New Program Demonstration:

The VA started its roll-out of its new health data program before several VSO representatives including TREA's Washington Office Executive Director. At the meeting, attended by the newly sworn in VA

Assistant Secretary and Technology LaVerne Council members of the VA's IT office demonstrated the new platform. While this is still not a single electronic medical healthcare it is a huge improvement of the present system. Now all the VA medical centers have different programs and cannot share medical records easily. This system will allow all medical providers in the VA to immediately call up a patient's records from throughout the VA system. It will also make it easier for healthcare providers to get DoD and third party providers' medical records. The platform is being rolled out slowly and is expected to be throughout the entire VA by next February. [Source: Washington News for the Enlisted | July 13, 2015 ++] throughout the entire VA by next February. [Source: Washington News for the Enlisted | July 13, 2015

Vet Toxic Exposure ~ Mustard Gas Update 02 ► VA Vet Search Faltered

Former service members have been battling the Veterans Affairs Department for decades on a variety of service-related claims — for exposure to Agent Orange, depleted uranium, burn-pit residue and a host of other environmental exposures detrimental to their health. But few former troops have waited as long as a group of World War II veterans used as guinea pigs to test mustard gas and other chemical weapons. In a three-part series that aired in June, National Public Radio turned a spotlight on these veterans, now in their 80s and 90s, whose health was damaged as a result of their service.

60,000 veterans who participated in the experiments have died. But roughly 4,000 who were supposed to receive notice of their eligibility for compensation and health benefits when the secret tests were revealed in the 1990s, never got word. And those who did receive letters have had claims denied, multiple times, according to NPR. VA in the 1990s promised to locate and compensate those 4,000 troops. But the NPR investigation found that fewer than 650 had been reached, and those who were notified received a single letter in the mail. VA officials said they couldn't find the rest of the group because military records of the experiments — largely mustard gas testing — were incomplete, according to the report. "There was no identifying information," Brad Flohr, a senior adviser for benefits at VA told NPR. "No Social Security numbers, no addresses, no ... way of identifying them. Although we tried."

But an NPR researcher was able to locate more than 1,200 veterans using VA's own list of those who participated, along with and public records. NPR interviewed more than 40 participants and the family members of those still alive, as well as those who passed away from exposure-related illnesses such as respiratory diseases, leukemia, skin disorders and cancer. The VA website states that the department considers claims for mustard gas exposure on a case-by-case basis and says vets with exposure-related disabilities or diseases may be eligible for compensation. But few veterans have ever had their claims approved, according to NPR. On the website, VA maintains it has an ongoing initiative to try to find the veterans. But even if they are found, they face another major hurdle in obtaining benefits. The former service members must provide records or some type of proof that they were gassed to be eligible for compensation and many of those records have been lost.

In a statement following the airing of NPR's story, VA officials said they are prepared to help veterans or survivors "determine their entitlement to benefits." "Additionally," the statement adds, "if NPR is willing to share with us the list of 1,200 or so veterans who they have been able to identify as having been exposed, VA will attempt to contact them." The report and the VA response have drawn rebukes from lawmakers who have called for an investigation into VA's failure to do what it said it would more than 20 years ago: claims for this group of veterans is "worthy of the committee's attention..

"It's deeply upsetting to think that we haven't made every possible effort to identify who these men are and if they're still suffering from these experiments," McCaskill wrote in a June 25 letter to McDonald. "The idea that our government intentionally exposed people to deadly chemicals 70 years ago is appalling — but equally unsettling is the notion that to this very day we've made little effort to identify these men and ensure that they're being properly treated and compensated," she said. [Source: Navy Times | July 13, 2015 ++]

VA Million Veteran Program Update 05 ► Four New Studies:

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is announcing four new studies that will use genetic and other data from VA's Million Veteran Program (MVP) to answer key questions on heart disease, kidney disease, and substance use—high-priority conditions affecting Veterans. MVP, which has enrolled more than 390,000 Veterans so far, has already become the nation's largest database linking genetic, clinical, lifestyle and military exposure information. Part of a beta test for data access, the newly funded studies are among the first to use MVP data to delve into pressing questions on Veterans' health. MVP-based studies on PTSD, schizophrenia and bipolar disorder are already underway. "MVP is making important discoveries that will impact healthcare for Veterans and all Americans," said VA Secretary Bob McDonald. "We're grateful to our Veteran partners, whose altruism has made this possible."

The new research, which will specifically include the understudied African American and Hispanic Veteran populations, ties into the broader national Precision Medicine Initiative announced by President Obama earlier this year. "There's already been an impressive amount of data collected through MVP, and we're continuing to engage more Veterans in the program and building its research infrastructure through studies like these," said Dr. Timothy O' Leary, VA's chief research and development officer. The new studies, involving consortiums of VA researchers and university colleagues, will explore specific questions related to chronic illnesses common among Veterans. They will also help establish new methods for securely linking MVP data with other sources of health information, including non-VA sources such as the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS). The new studies include the following:

- Cardiovascular risk factors—probing the genes that influence how obesity and lipid levels affect heart risk. Using MVP data, their team will also look at whether these genetic factors differ among African Americans and Hispanics. "These populations are extremely important in VA," said Amin.
- Multi-substance use—at the Philadelphia VA Medical Center, will examine the genetic risk factors for chronic use of alcohol, tobacco, and opioids—and the dangerous use of all three together offers an unprecedented opportunity to advance this field
- Pharmacogenomics of kidney disease—will focus on how genes affect the risk and progression of kidney disease. One goal is to examine how patients with diabetes—who often develop kidney problems—respond differently to the drug metformin, the standard first-line treatment for diabetes, based on their genetic profile. The project will also look at the genetics of hypertension, a major risk factor for kidney disease.
- Metabolic conditions—a team of researchers from five VA regions and two universities, will explore the role of genetics in obesity, diabetes, and abnormal lipid levels (namely, cholesterol and triglycerides), as drivers of heart disease. This project will help to more thoroughly understand the underlying causes of cardiometabolic disease and develop new therapies that are safe, effective, and personalized.

For more information about MVP and VA research in general, visit www.research.va.gov. [Source: VA News Release | July 07, 2015 ++]

Update on Military Awards ► New Reg Offers Guidance

The newly revised edition of the Army regulation for military awards, AR 600-8-22, lays out the procedures that service members, veterans and surviving family members need to follow for requesting replacement medals of previously awarded decorations. Replacement medals will be issued on a one-time, no-cost basis to

the recipient of the award, or the primary next of kin to a deceased recipient. Subsequent replacement medals or service ribbons for individuals not on active duty may be made at cost price, according to the 25 JUN update of the regulation.

Government replacement of service medals and ribbons that predate World War I is not possible, as these items no longer are carried in the military supply system. However, many of these decorations may be purchased from private dealers in military insignia. Medals and appurtenances issued by the Army include decorations, service medals and ribbons, palms, rosettes, clasps, arrowheads, service stars (campaign/battle), the French Fourragere, Netherlands Orange Lanyard, and Army Good Conduct Medal. In addition to these are oak leaf clusters, numerals, "V" devices, certificates for decorations, lapel buttons for decorations, ten-year devices, Berlin Airlift Devices, containers for decorations, miniature decorations to foreign military personnel, letter "M" devices and the Medal of Honor flag.

Badges and appurtenances issued by the Army include combat and special skill badges; Basic Marksmanship Badges; Distinguished Marksmanship Badges; excellence in competition badges; Basic Marksmanship Qualification Badges and bars; Army Staff Identification Badge; The Guard, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier Identification Badge; Army Recruiter Badge; Career Counselor Badge; and the new Basic, Senior and Master Instructor Badges. Items not issued or sold by the Army include miniature medals, service ribbons, devices and appurtenances; lapel buttons for service medals, and lapel buttons for service prior to Sept. 8, 1939; Active Reserve lapel buttons; lapel buttons for badges; certificates for badges; foreign badges, and miniature Combat Infantryman, Expert Infantryman, Combat Medical, Expert Field Medical and Aviation badges, and dress miniature badges.

When requesting replacement medals for awards issued by the U. S. military services, individuals should access the website of the National Personnel Records Center (<http://www.archives.gov/veterans/replace-medals.html>). Medals and appurtenances awarded while in federal service with the Army or a sister U.S. service will be issued on request to the appropriate military service as follows:

- Requests for personnel in active federal military service, or the Army National Guard or Army Reserve should be submitted to the individual's unit commander.
- Requests for personnel who do not hold current Army status, or who died before Oct. 1, 2002, should be submitted to the National Personnel Records Center, 1 Archives Drive, St. Louis, Mo. 63138-1002.
- Requests for individuals who retired, were discharged (or have a Reserve obligation), or who died (except for general officers) after Oct. 1, 2002, should be submitted to the Commander, Army Human Resources Command (AHRC-PDP-A), 1600 Spearhead Division Ave., Fort Knox, Ky. 40122-5408.
- Requests for general officers should be submitted to the Commander, Army Human Resources Command (AHRC-PDP-A), 1600 Spearhead Division Ave., Fort Knox, Ky. 40122-5408.

Addresses for requesting medals from the non-Army U.S. military services are:

- Navy awards: Chief of Naval Operations (DNS-35), Navy Pentagon, Washington, D.C. 20350-2000.
- Air Force awards: Air Force Personnel Center, Attn: AFPC/DSPSIDR, 550 C St., Randolph Air Force Base, Texas 78150-4712.

- Marine Corps awards: Commandant, Marine Corps, Manpower and Reserve Affairs, Code MMMA, 3280 Russell Road, Quantico, Va. 22134-5103.
- Coast Guard awards: Commandant (G-PS-5/TP41, U.S. Coast Guard, Washington, D.C. 20593-7238.

[Source: FRG-BVA | Jim Tice | July 07, 2015 ++]

VA Police ► Law Enforcement Officer Designation Sought

U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown has requested Veterans Affairs police be designated as law enforcement officers with authority beyond VA property, citing an Ohio case in which a shooter fled a medical center. Ohio's Democratic senator asked VA Secretary Robert McDonald for the change in a letter 16 JUL. Brown says VA police currently don't have authority to pursue immediate threats beyond VA property and that could hinder their ability to respond. Last year, a former VA employee responsible for Dayton VA Medical Center shooting fled the facility. Brown's office says VA police had no authority to immediately pursue him off the property. He was arrested later by other law enforcement officers and pleaded guilty to an assault charge. The VA says it will review Brown's letter and respond to his office.

VA police duties under the proposal would depend on policies and regulations set by the secretary and relationships with local law enforcement, Brown's office said. The senator's intent isn't to add more powers or responsibilities to VA police, but to ensure they have the authority to fulfill their responsibilities, according to his office. VA police are considered a protective uniformed police force, and law enforcement officer designation would enable them to participate in the Federal Employment Retirement System, as do U.S. Capitol Police and U.S. Park Police, the senator's office said. [Source: The Associated Press | Lisa Cornwell | July 17, 2015 ++]

POW/MIA Update 61 ► Mitsubishi Apologies to WWII Vets

A major Japanese corporation gave an unprecedented apology Sunday to a 94-year-old U.S. prisoner of war for using American POWs for forced labor during World War II, nearly 70 years after the war ended. At the solemn ceremony hosted by the Museum of Tolerance at the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles, James Murphy, of Santa Maria, accepted the apology from executives of Mitsubishi Materials in front of a projected image of the U.S. and Japanese flags. Murphy, who was forced to work in Mitsubishi copper mines under harsh conditions, called the apology sincere and remorseful. "This is a glorious day," Murphy said. "For 70 years we wanted this."

Space "A" Travel Update : AMC Terminal Telephone Numbers

Per DoD 4515.13-R, "C6.1.9. Conditions of Travel, there is no guaranteed space for any traveler. The Department of Defense is not obligated to continue an individual's travel or return him or her to point of origin, or any other point. Travelers shall have sufficient personal funds to pay for commercial transportation to return to their residence or duty station if space-available transportation is not available." If you plan to travel Space-A, contact the Air Mobility Command (AMC) passenger terminal(s) where you plan to depart from. The terminal staff will have the most-current information available. Terminal number are:

AMC Terminal

- Baltimore-Washington IAP, Maryland 410-918-6900
- Dover AFB, Delaware 302-677-4088
- Fairchild AFB, Washington 509-247-3406
- Jacksonville NAS, Florida 904-542-8159
- JB Andrews, Maryland 301-961-3604
- JB Charleston, South Carolina 843-963-3048
- JB Lewis-McChord, Washington 253-982-7259
- JB McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst New Jersey 609-754-5023
- Little Rock AFB, Arkansas 501-987-3342
- MacDill AFB, Florida 813-828-2440
- McConnell AFB, Kansas 316-759-5404
- NS Norfolk, Virginia 757-444-4118
- Pope Field, North Carolina 910-394-6527
- Scott AFB, Illinois 618-256-3017
- Seattle-Tacoma IAP, Washington 253-982-3504
- Travis AFB, California 707-424-1854

Go to <http://www.amc.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-131220-049.pdf> to download a Space-Available Travel Request AMC 140 form. Visit the AMC website for OCONUS - Overseas terminals and contact information: www.amc.af.mil/amctravel. [Source: HONORS Retirement Services Newsletter | Aug 2015 ++]

World War I Memorial Update 05 ► Needs A Makeover

The National World War I Memorial — currently a forlorn park near the White House that contains an empty concrete pad and a statue of Gen. John J. Pershing — needs a makeover. The World War I Centennial Commission launched an international competition in May to design a monument to the Great War "on the National Mall," or in this case, on neighboring Pennsylvania Avenue. Professionals and students were encouraged to apply, but anyone with a concept who can sketch, explain their idea in 250 words and pay a \$100 fee can enter. Commission members say the goal is to transform the landscape from its status of "park with a memorial element tacked onto it" to a "national World War I memorial" that doubles as green space for the surrounding district of hotels, theaters and residences, most notably 1600 Pennsylvania.

Gen. John J. Pershing, who led the American Expeditionary Forces to victory during World War I, is commemorated through a statue at Pershing Square Park in downtown Washington.

"We feel [Pershing Park] lacks a lot of the emotional power, the inspiration, the opportunity for grief and reflection" that other Washington memorials have, said Edwin Fountain, commission vice chairman. "What we are hoping to do is enhance that memorial and bring these aspects to the memorial site." The current plaza, which opened in 1981, was designed by modernist landscape architect Paul Friedberg and contains a monument to Pershing created by architect Wallace Harrison. But the park rarely has been used as intended — an urban oasis of flowing fountains in the summertime and ice rink in the winter. Instead, it has fallen into disrepair, a victim of high maintenance costs, a lack of a water filtration system and a below-grade esplanade that attracts the flotsam and jetsam of urban living — plastic bags, snack wrappers, cigarette butts — and little else.

After years of lobbying Congress for a national World War I memorial, two were designated in the 2015 Defense Authorization Act — the existing World War I Museum and Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri, and the Pershing Park location in the nation's capital, which will be redesigned at a cost of \$21 million to \$25 million using private funds. More than 4 million Americans served during World War I, and 116,000 died — more U.S. troops than lost their lives in Korea and Vietnam combined. Commission members want the new memorial to honor those individuals, to recall the memory of the people who left their homes to engage in the country's first large-scale overseas war. "I think there is an aspect that is forgotten from World War I, and that's the people who served in the war ... the mothers and fathers, the sons and daughters who went off to fight America's first big crusade," commission chairman, retired Army Col. Robert Dalessandro said at a press conference on the design competition.

The competition ended 21 JUL. A jury will choose three to five of the best inputs to proceed to the competition's second phase where each will be required to partner with a U.S.-based design firm for final consideration. Those selected for the second phase also will receive a \$25,000 honorarium. The last American World War I veteran, Frank Buckles, died in 2011 at age 110. The former Army corporal served as honorary chairman of the World War I Memorial Foundation, lending his name to the effort to restore the District of Columbia War Memorial on the National Mall, an elegant marble bandstand erected in 1931. The commission hopes to announce finalists Aug. 4, with the winner declared in January. Groundbreaking is planned for Veterans Day 2017.

"We have memorials to these other three wars [World War II, Korea and Vietnam], but none to the one that started the 20th century, [none] to the war that directly or indirectly led to these later conflicts," Fountain said. For more information on World War I and details on competition, see the commission's website www.worldwar1centennial.org. [Source: MilitaryTimes | July 13, 2015 ++]

VA Telehealth Update 07: New Medical Technology Pilots

The Department of Veterans Affairs is running several new medical technology pilots, including systems that could let patients receive healthcare without leaving their homes or neighborhoods, VA Deputy Secretary Sloan Gibson told an audience in Washington on 31 JUL. With the rapid development of virtual care, or telemedicine, "what we've seen is a transformation from primarily an inpatient model to primarily an outpatient model," Gibson said during a conference hosted by tech association AFCEA. For instance, the VA's Center for Innovation is developing an app that would let technicians adjust patients' hearing aids via a Bluetooth connection, Gibson said. Another developing tech project, called the One-VA Pharmacy, would let pharmacists anywhere access the VA's health IT system and fill a veteran's prescription. According to Gibson, nearly one-third of veterans have volunteered to participate in virtual care delivery, up from about 18 percent two years ago. For those patients who don't have broadband connections in their homes, VA is beginning to issue mobile devices, tablets and netbooks with high-speed connections, Gibson added. "More and more of our care is going to be delivered virtually," he said. [Source: NextGov | July 31, 2015 ++]

HEALTH CARE NEWS

NOTE...NOTE: To assure you don't get hit with medical bills you never expected. Avoid Urgent Care Centers in Medical Emergencies. If you are a TRICARE beneficiary and you have an emergency, be sure to go to an hospital emergency room to ensure proper coverage. Use of Urgent care coverage depends on your plan and, unlike emergency care, requires an official referral. For advice, you can also call the TRICARE Nurse Advice Line at 1-800-874-2273, option 1. By calling the Nurse Advice Line you can talk to a registered nurse who can give you healthcare advice, help you find a doctor or schedule a next-day appointment at a military hospital or clinic.

Service animals in VA facilities:

VA Announces New Rules Regarding Service Animals in VA Facilities On Monday the VA announced revised regulations regarding the presence of animals on VA property. The updated regulation ensures VA practices remain consistent with applicable federal law. It develops a clear and consistent understanding of the criteria governing facility access for service animals.

"As I have traveled to VA facilities throughout the country, I have heard from many Veterans about what a vital role their service animals play in their lives," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald. "The revised regulation will ensure veterans and employees have clear guidance regarding the presence of service animals in our facilities. VA remains committed to ensuring America's veterans have access to the healthcare benefits for which they are eligible."

Under the revised regulation, only dogs that are individually trained to perform work or tasks on behalf of an individual with a disability will be considered service animals. Other animals will not be permitted in VA facilities, unless expressly allowed as an exception under the regulation for activities such as animal-assisted therapy or for other reasons such as law enforcement purposes.

The regulation further confirms that service animals may access VA property subject to the same terms that govern the admission of the public to VA property, and may be restricted from certain areas on VA properties to ensure that patient care, patient safety, and infection control standards are not compromised.

In accordance with required practices, the revised regulation was published in the Federal Register in November 2014, to obtain feedback from Veterans, advocacy organizations and other stakeholders. Over the next thirty days, VA will provide training to frontline employees and ensure policies at all facilities are consistent with the new regulation.

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TRICARE Pharmacy Rules Changing for Maintenance, Brand-name Drugs

DoD News, Defense Media Activity

WASHINGTON, August 21, 2015 — TRICARE beneficiaries who take certain brand-name medications on a regular basis will be required to fill prescriptions at a military treatment facility or through a mail-in program beginning Oct. 1, a Defense Health Agency official said yesterday.

George Jones, DHA's pharmacy operations division chief, said the new policy does not apply to active-duty troops, overseas beneficiaries, nursing-home residents and those with other health insurance that has a prescription-drug program. In certain circumstances, he added, some beneficiaries might be waived from the program on an individual basis.

The brand-name, regularly used, or "maintenance" medications could include those to treat chronic conditions such as blood pressure or cholesterol issues, Jones explained. Generic medications are not affected by the new policy, he said.

Beneficiaries to Be Notified:

TRICARE pharmacy beneficiaries who will be affected will receive a letter from TRICARE in early to mid-September, with instructions on how to make the transition from retail pharmacies to a military pharmacy or the Express Scripts mail-in program, he said.

Those with questions about medications in the brand-name maintenance category can call Express Scripts customer service at 1-877-363-1303 or look up the drug online at TRICARE's website.

Beneficiaries can track their medication status and expected delivery date by calling or going online to Express Scripts.

The new TRICARE policy stems from the 2013 National Defense Authorization Act.

Are they your battle buddy – or just unbelievable?

August 27, 2015

If you serve – or have served – in the military, chances are you feel a pretty tight bond with your brothers- and sisters-in-arms. If you share a common experience with someone, it only makes sense that you trust them, want to associate with them, or even do business with them.

But here's something to bear in mind: scammers count on your trust in fellow servicemembers – and use it against you. A con artist might have actual service experience or they might be lying about it. Either way, they're highly skilled at exploiting a military connection to get in good with you. Once they have your trust, they use it to deflect any questions and to throw you off track while they cheat you. It's known as affinity fraud – when someone uses their membership in a group to scam another member. It could be someone claiming you can trust them because of the shared experience of serving in the military.

Scammers try to use a supposed military bond to take your hard-earned cash. They may pursue servicemembers, families, or anyone with sympathy for the military community. The scams can take many forms, from promises for quick and easy credit and car title loans to sky-high returns on bogus investment deals. Or they might lure you with hopes for online romance, interest in charitable giving, or the appeal of getting super sweet housing at eye-catching prices. Here are a few tips to help you see clearly if a scammer tries blowing smoke at you.

- Walk, don't run. Take your time. Any deal that pressures you to act immediately probably doesn't end well for you. Slow down and think about it – rushing into a supposed "deal" will usually just buy you trouble.
- Hold the line on the hype. Is this deal promising you the moon and the stars? Are they claiming you'll see risk-free results on an investment? Stop – there's no such thing as "risk-free." Don't let a scammer's skillful hype cloud your thinking.

- Listen for the name game. Do they throw around the words “veterans” or “military families” in their name or ads? That doesn’t necessarily mean that veterans or the families of active-duty personnel support the organization or will benefit from a donation.
- Get it in writing. Before you open your wallet, look at the terms of the deal in writing. Then take your time and review. Are the terms what you expected? If not, can you really trust that company?
- Check it out. Always do your homework. Talk to others. Look up the company online and search for consumer complaints. Consider whether this deal works for you. Can you afford to lose your money?

SOURCE: FTC Consumer Information at http://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/are-they-your-battle-buddy-or-just-unbelievable?utm_source=govdelivery

Tricare Prime beneficiaries will see a slight uptick in their annual enrollment fees starting Oct. 1.

Individual retirees under age 65 will pay \$282, up from the current rate of \$277, while those with families will pay \$565, up 2 percent from the current rate of \$555.

Medically retired troops and their families, as well as family members of those who died on active duty, will not be required to pay the increases.

Tricare Prime is a health-maintenance style benefit for active-duty personnel, their families, military retirees under age 65 and their families. Under the program, active troops and their dependents are exempt from paying the enrollment fee.

By law, Tricare Prime enrollment fees increase each year by a percentage based on the annual retirement pay cost-of-living adjustment for the calendar year.

Whether the enrollment increases remain the only payment hike for Tricare this year remains to be seen:

House and Senate lawmakers are debating whether to increase co-payments for prescriptions filled under Tricare at retail pharmacies and by mail order.

The Senate favors a plan that would increase co-payments for brand-name prescriptions and drugs not in Tricare's formulary starting in 2016 and nearly doubling by 2025.

The House version of the bill does not include those increases, and instead recommends that the Defense Department undergo a pilot program to determine whether "preferred pharmacy networks," which purchase medications at the same rates available to the federal government, would save the government money.

Congressional negotiators are expected to resume debate on the fiscal 2016 defense

Please. Please. A reminder to Base Pharmacy users,

If you are renewing a prescription , and you are a [Project Emeritus volunteer](#) on checking in be sure to take the “ B “ stub , from the dispensing machine and show your Emeritus ID card. when you hand in your request..

Army & Air Force Exchange Service Public Affairs

Be careful where you shop. NEWS RELEASE: 15-075

Sept. 14, 2015

DALLAS – An individual or individuals using the “Exchange Inc.” name to handle vehicle purchases has once again been placing advertisements in auto magazines and commercial newspapers, leading Army & Air Force Exchange Service shoppers to believe they’re purchasing a vehicle through the Department of Defense (DoD) retailer.

"This has been an issue in the past , and now it’s beginning to surface again where someone is using the Exchange's trademarked logo and name without permission to purportedly handle vehicles transactions in the

United States on behalf of private seller. "Unfortunately, some have sent money only to receive nothing in return."

Despite the fact that military exchanges do not have the authority to sell vehicles or represent private sellers in completing transactions in the continental United States, the individuals responsible for these advertisements have left consumers with the impression they are doing business with the DoD's oldest and largest exchange service

"This type of fraud has proliferated with the use of the Internet and continues to be a challenge because oftentimes the perpetrator cannot be identified as the methods they utilize are not traceable back to any individual. One case, money wired by an individual was picked up in Bangladesh, indicating this crime goes well beyond U.S. borders.

Shoppers who believe that they may have been taken advantage of can file a complaint through the Internet Crime Complaint Center at www.ic3.gov <<http://www.ic3.gov>>

Exchange facilities are located solely on military installations. While the Exchange does have mail order and Internet offerings, the Exchange does not advertise in civilian outlets such as metropolitan newspapers or automobile sales magazines. All advertisements for legitimate Exchange offerings are published in outlets whose audiences are mostly composed of military members.

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*****Disclaimer*****

The information contained in this issue is just that – Informational -(FYI). The objective is only to PASS THE WORD in order to keep the military community informed. It is not an "Official" DoD sanctioned newsletter and as such should not be quoted as an authoritative source on DoD policy. It is the responsibility of readers to verify exactly how information applies to them if they intend to expend funds or time in following up on the data provided in the articles.